*The Fountain of Life freely opened to the willing-hearted Sinner.*

A

# SERMON

Occaſioned by the

DEATH

OF

MISS ELIZABETH MACGOWAN,

Who departed this Life, *February* 19, 1774,

In the SIXTEENTH YEAR of her AGE.

Preached at Mr. MACGOWAN's Meeting-Houſe near Devonſhire-ſquare, February 27, 1774.

AND PUBLISHED AT HIS REQUEST.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

The HYMN ſung on the OCCASION.

By BENJAMIN WALLIN, A.M.

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REV. XXII. 17.

——*And whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*

SORROWFUL is the providence that now brings me hither. The deceaſe of a lovely child in her bloom. But a few months ſince her ſmiling healthful countenance, in connexion with a moral and pious behaviour, raiſed a joyous expectation in the breaſt of her affectionate parents and friends. Alas, what is man! Truly we ſee that "he "cometh forth like a flower, and is cut "down!" Job. xiv. 2. The face of this amiable virgin is now covered with the earth; we ſhall ſee it no more, till ſhe awakes in the likeneſs of her Redeemer. I preſume that ſome in this aſſembly, at leaſt it is certain the preacher, whoſe like ſorrows are revived by this ſervice, can ſympathize with a brother in tears, for an an only and promiſing daughter.

In every diſtreſs the chriſtian is relieved from the goſpel of Chriſt, which flows as a river with everlaſting conſolation, and affords a good hope through grace, equal to our ſupport, even at the ſwellings of Jordan. When a man views himſelf in the covenant, which is ordered in all things and ſure, it will quiet him, though bereaved of *undutiful* children; then how much reaſon has that mourner to comfort himſelf, who, on ſufficient evidence of her unaffected piety, can by faith behold his beloved child in the arms of Jeſus, a partaker with him in that firm conſtitution of mercy and love? And, may we not ſoberly conclude, that this is the happineſs of the deceaſed, however early in life, or unknown, ſince ſhe was enabled to draw conſolation from the paſſage before us? Surely a ſtranger intermeddleth not with the joy of this gracious proclamation!

It ſeems to me, that in the two laſt chapters of this book of Revelation, which is as it were the head-ſtone of prophecy, and in which our text is contained, we have a magnificent deſcription of the bride, the Lamb's wife, or the church, in that perfection of glory and ſplendor, in which ſhe will ſhine at the coming of her Lord.

Lord. I am aware that ſome eminent writers conſider them as an exhibition of the millennium, or the thouſand years, during which the ſaints ſhall glorioufly reign with Jeſus on earth; but with ſubmiſſion, it is evident, from chap. xx. that the thouſand years are expired before the ſtate of the church, here repreſented, takes place; and I cannot but think it becoming and ſafe to prefer the order of the word to any human ſyſtem whatever, and eſpecially in a prophecy which relates to the completion of the myſtery of God, by his Son, Jeſus Chriſt; nor is the glory of the church at his appearance and kingdom any where to be found, if not in theſe chapters.

BUT our text is not ſtrictly a part of the *viſion* John ſaw, but of the *voice* which he heard, in confirmation of all that he had been ſhewn. That all men might know the certainty of the things which are ſhortly to be accompliſhed, to the everlaſting joy of the righteous, and the eternal perdition of the wicked, Jeſus himſelf, as it were, ſteps forward in his throne, and, with his own lips, from thence ſupports the authority of his celeſtial ambaſſador, with a majeſty and grace

becoming himſelf; ver. 14. "I Jeſus, q. d. "I Jeſus, the faithful witneſs, the firſt be- "gotten from the dead, who am he that "liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive "for evermore; I Jeſus, the incarnate Son of "the Father, the root of David, his Lord, "his God, and his antitype, but his offspring "after the fleſh; the bright and morning "ſtar; I Jeſus, the Lamb ſlain from the "foundation of the world, the Alpha and "Omega, who am eternal and unchangeable "in my divine nature, and mediatorial cha- "racter, in whom all the myſtery of God in "the diſpenſations of providence and grace, "is finiſhed, even I have ſent mine angel to "teſtify unto you theſe things; they are true; "they ſhall certainly come to paſs, and that "very ſoon; behold, I come quickly." To this voice of their Beloved, the ſaints joyfully reply, with longing deſire; ver. 17. And the Spirit and the bride, or, as ſome, the ſpiritual bride; the church militant and triumphant, ſay, Come. This is the language of the choſen in heaven and earth, with ardour they ſay, Come, Lord Jeſus, (ver. 20.) in all thy glory, to our compleat ſalvation: Such is the expectation of the faithful, there-

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fore "let him that heareth ſay, Come." Let every ſpiritual man, who knows the joyful ſound, and hears this voice of Jeſus with appropriation and love, join in the welcome; and let him alſo that is athirſt, come; i. e. let him who thirſts after righteouſneſs and life, believe on the Lord Jeſus, and laying hold of the ſame bleſſed hope, unite in this ſalutation: yes, and that no humble, contrite ſoul ſhould be dejected, or deſpair, this counſel of God is further explained in the text; and the object of his mercy ſo deſcribed, that a babe in Chriſt may diſcern himſelf in it.—"And whoſoever *will*, let him take of the "water of life freely." A gracious report from the exalted Saviour, which is conttinued by the goſpel where-ever it is preached, and ſpeaks to every ſenſible ſinner, who feels his heart *willing*.

THIS evangelical paſſage conſiſts of three branches; namely, a divine exhortation or warrant; to whom the warrant is given; and the terms, or manner in which every one deſcribed, is admitted to this grace. After a brief diſcuſſion of theſe, I ſhall attempt to illuſtrate the neceſſity of appropriating ſalvation as the free gift of God, and cloſe with a few

a few anecdotes of the dear youth deceaſed, and a ſhort addreſs to the audience; and, O may it be a quickening word to every one preſent, but more eſpecially to the mourners in Zion! And,

I. We have a divine *exhortation* or *warrant*. In either point of view it amounts to the ſame: Every exhortation implies a *warrant* to conform to its dictates, and the publiſhing of a *warrant*, carries in it an *exhortation* to apply it. In this ſacred declaration each one addreſſed is invited and authorized without any ſcruple, "to take of the water of "life." A joyful welcome to the thirſty! It ſeems to convey an idea of perſons waiting at a fountain or river, with earneſt deſire of leave to partake, each one wiſhing and hearkening for himſelf, and accordingly it runs in the ſingular number; "let *him* take of the "water of life." Religion is a perſonal thing; the firſt concern of a man is his own ſalvation, and it is the pleaſure of the Lord to direct the proclamations of his grace individually, that every penitent may riſe up, and lay hold of the hope ſet before him.

Two

Two things are eſſential in this divine ſentence: The object before us, and the concern which he who anſwers to the deſcription in the text may and ought to have with it.

1. WE have opened to our view the *water of life*. No doubt this is the water of that fountain ſo graciouſly promiſed to him that is athirſt, chap. xxi. 6. Even the ſtreams of that river which make glad the city of God, Pſalm xlvi. 4. The metaphor may be variouſly applied: ſometimes the doctrines and ordinances of the goſpel ſeem intended by water; out of theſe, as from ſo many wells of ſalvation, the faithful draw to their abundant ſatisfaction, Iſa. xii. 3. and in chap. xxxv. 6. On the ſpread of the goſpel in the wilderneſs of the world, it is ſaid, that "the "thirſty land is become ſprings of water," to which all are invited, who are ready to periſh, Iſa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that "thirſteth, come ye to the waters." Alſo in John vii. 38. ſaith our Lord, "he that "believeth on me, out of his belly ſhall flow "rivers of living water." And this is expreſsly referred to the Spirit or Holy Ghoſt, which he ſhed abundantly on them that received him. But theſe are all ſubordinate to Chriſt, who

who is the fountain of life, Pſalm xxxvi. 9. whom God hath ſet forth a propitiation, through faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25. and accordingly the Meſſiah, on account of the bleſſings of his kingdom, is ſaid to be "as rivers of water in a dry place," Iſa. xxxii. 2. This is the water of that river which John ſaw opened in the heavenly Jeruſalem, ver. 1. "A pure river of water of life, clear as chryſtal, proceeding from the throne of God, and of the Lamb," which is generally taken for the everlaſting love of the Father, the ſource of all ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, in his Son; in the beſtowment of which his ſovereignty and righteouſneſs are wonderfully diſplayed.

It is the ſame living water, mentioned by Jeſus to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 10, 14. and which, compared with his declaration chap. vi. 35. will appear to be that abundance of grace received by faith, which ſatiates the weary and heavy-laden ſinner. We ſhall preſently ſee that the perſon addreſſed in this divine proclamation is one ſelf-condemned, being convinced of his ignorance, guilt, and pollution, and therefore ready to periſh; for this is the uniform idea of him that is ſpiritually athirſt. Now this water

ter of life muſt needs comprehend what is adapted, yea and equal to, the wants of an awakened tranſgreſſor; which is no other than a ſpiritual underſtanding, peace with God, remiſſion of ſins, free juſtification, true holineſs, and life everlaſting. Theſe are to be found alone in Chriſt, who is made of God to his people, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. Even all bleſſings treaſured up in him, whoſe blood cleanſeth from ſin; which ſtands confirmed in 1 John v. 11. "This is the record, God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son." So then this living water is the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus, who is the fountain of life, in and from whom the bleſſings of redemption flow freely for the refreſhment, and ſalvation of a periſhing ſinner. And therefore,

2. THE concern which every one hereafter deſcribed is called upon and warranted to have with this grace, is, to *take* it. The goſpel is not a lovely ſong, or for mere entertainment: there is reaſon to fear that ſome periſh in a curious, but heartleſs ſpeculation on its bleſſed truths; however nothing ſhort of a practical, or experimental concern with Chriſt will ſuffice,

and accordingly this is the counsel of God, to revive the heart of the humble, and it answers to the desire of his soul. "Let him *take* of the water of life." To *take* this water, no doubt, is an active and personal thing, the sinner's own act and deed; and is, in general, to apply by faith this grace to himself; it is a spiritual concern with covenant blessings, in a way of believing, common to those who have laid hold of the hope set before them in the gospel, which may be considered under a threefold distinction. The primary idea is that of *reception*; it is a general word for receiving any thing with the mouth or the hand, and is suited both to the metaphor used in the text; and the experience of the faithful, who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as the gift of God, and as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, when they have recourse to him for pardon and life. Hence to believe on his name, and to receive him, are one and the same, John i. 12. With this stands connected *appropriation*. Our text warrants to the penitent, a personal claim in this grace. The kingdom of heaven, i. e. the gospel in its power, is compared, by our Lord, Matt. xiii. 44. "unto

"treasure

" treaſure hid in a field, the which, when a " man hath found, he hideth, and for joy " thereof, goeth and ſelleth all that he hath, " and buyeth that field." This agrees with the paſſage in John but now mentioned; " As many as received him, to them gave " he power, or privilege, to become the " ſons of God;" i. e. to appropriate the inheritance of the adopted children, which is nothing ſhort of righteouſneſs and life; in a ſaving reception of Chriſt, the ſubject lays hold, and takes poſſeſſion of him, as *his* Lord and *his* God; *his* light and ſalvation. And then, another thing included is that of *enjoyment*. *Take* the water of life; i. e. let him take and drink it; let him refreſh and ſolace his ſoul in my grace. 1 John iv. 14. " Whoſoever drinketh of the water " that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt." Thus it is an exhortation to rejoice in the Lord; and indeed few, if any, cordially embrace him without ſome degree of ſpiritual pleaſure; nor is this confined to the heart; but the humble ſoul is hereby invited to a *public* claim in this mercy, it is an exhortation *openly* to delight himſelf in the Lord, and amounts to no leſs than a warrant

to confeſs him in baptiſm, and to walk in communion with his ſaints. This is the proclamation, to whomſoever it comes: It calls upon and authorizes every one to receive, appropriate, and rejoice, in the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus; and this divine counſel is liberal, yea, without any reſtriction: It is not ſaid, take *of* the water of life, as though the bleſſings of grace were divided, or any thing of Chriſt was with-held from the perſon invited; the words run at large, and are indefinite; *the water of life.* A thirſty ſoul is not reſtrained from drinking even to the bottom of this fountain; he that may drink, may drink abundantly, without preſumption or danger. It is poſſible for a perſon to be intoxicated with vain ſpeculations on the goſpel, and lifted up in himſelf, under a falſe conceit of his chriſtianity, though the Spirit of Chriſt is not in him; but there is no drinking to exceſs of this water; the more a penitent partakes of it, the more humble, ſpiritual, and holy, he is: Indeed *all* the grace in Jeſus is needful to ſalvation, nor is there *any* of it reſerved from the ſinner, who pants after life; a *whole* Chriſt is preſented, and he that is enabled to act upon it,

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may ſatiate himſelf in the abundance of his grace; nor ſhould it be overlooked that here is no limitation as to *time*; not *to-morrow*, but *to-day*, the invitation is given; in this reſpect, "now is the accepted time, now is the "day of ſalvation," which is no inconſiderable encouragement.

BUT after all, here is ſtill an inſuperable obſtacle in the way: the ſinner has *nothing*; we ſhall preſently ſee that he is as *poor* as he is *wretched*: If the leaſt degree of merit, in any conceivable future period or circumſtances, ſhould be required, he is for ever excluded; he muſt periſh at the fountain of life: But, thanks be to God, grace triumphs over all the unworthineſs of the ſubject, in the diſpenſation of his covenant mercy, as will appear from what remains to be conſidered in the text. I proceed therefore,

II. To the *object* addreſſed in this gracious proclamation. Who is hereby warranted to take this living water, or to appropriate the bleſſings of redemption in Chriſt? And here the infinite wiſdom and condeſcending goodneſs of the Lord, is wonderful indeed. The deſcription is not taken from any thing natural;

natural: Age, ſex, and providential ſtation, or circumſtances, are foreign to the ſubject: Nor is it ſaid, let him that is amiable in his natural temper, or moral behaviour, which are beautiful in their kind, and highly acceptable with men: Neither is it he that is better diſpoſed of himſelf to love God and ſerve him, for the carnal mind is enmity againſt God; it is not, neither can it be ſubject to his law, Rom. viii. 7. So that a better diſpoſition in nature, or in one or more natural perſons, than in others, for the obedience of faith, is a mere imagination. If an inſtance could be found of this previous good bias in the natural mind, to which ſome pretend, the ſinner might glory in his ſalvation; but no man is invited to this fountain that has life in himſelf; then the goſpel would be fooliſhneſs indeed; for it is adapted only to ſelf-condemned convicts, to whom nothing but ſin and weakneſs belong: Nor is the perſon deſcribed by any thing which may diſtinguiſh one ſenſible ſinner from another; the criterion is not, whether his tranſgreſſions have been few or many, his converſion early or late, the circumſtances of it more or leſs extraordinary, or from his ſtronger convictions

tions or light. No; the deſcription is taken from the heart; the eaſieſt but ſureſt criterion that can be conceived. "Whoſoever will." On a moment's reflection, the weakeſt can tell where his *will* is; it is the pulſe of his ſoul, a thing which he habitually feels; if Paul is an example of experience, the chriſtian may diſcern what he wills, even when he is captivated and carried aſide through the prevalance of indwelling ſin, Rom. vii. 16. And indeed if there was any difficulty or uncertainty concerning the bias or bent of the will, in a perſon of underſtanding or obſervation, the proclamation would not be adequate to the deſign of the Almighty, ſeeing then it might be out of the power of a ſenſible ſinner to comply; but in every ſtate the will is to be diſcerned in the prevailing affection of the mind; and in the preſent caſe it will appear a moſt certain and eaſy thing for the object to diſtinguiſh himſelf, when we conſider that the willingneſs referred to, is not a bare wiſh, or ſimple inclination, ſcarce ſenſible enough to determine, but a vehement or eager deſire, ſuch as Herod had to kill John, when provoked by his faithful reproof, Matt. xiv. 5. where the ſame word is uſed. It is

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the will of him that is *athirſt!* To thirſt, in a goſpel ſenſe, is to be ſo impreſſed with a ſenſe of wretchedneſs by ſin, in a full perſuaſion of the perfection of Chriſt as a Saviour, as to pant for the grace that is in him. The longings of David to drink the water of the well of Bethlehem, 2 Sam. xxiii. 15. was a ſhadow of the convinced ſinner's thirſt after Jeſus; he muſt drink or die; and can the ſubject be inſenſible of theſe ardent deſires, or at any loſs about this mark of the perſon here invited to apply the ſalvation of God to himſelf? And as this is the *eaſieſt* and *ſureſt*, ſo it is the *ſafeſt* criterion; it leaves no room for boaſting; the willing hearted know that they are made ſo by God, whoſe people are willing in the day of his power, Pſalm cx. 3. and who worketh in his ſaints both to will and to do of his good pleaſure, Phil. ii. 13. And this willingneſs, being of the operation of God, is an evidence to the ſubject of his favor, and an inducement to his hope in Chriſt, in whoſe miſſion the Father magnifies his love to his choſen, who were involved in the ruin of the fall; there is therefore the higheſt reaſon for him that is willing to accept the invitation, and take

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this water of life, and eſpecially when he adverts,

III. To the *terms* or *manner* in which he is directed, or admitted to apply this grace to himſelf, and that is *freely*. This expreſſion in the goſpel ſtands oppoſed to every kind and degree of merit; an inſtance of which we have in that capital paſſage, Rom. iii. 24. where the apoſtle, in proving that God juſtifieth a ſinner as *ungodly*, or without regard to any work he hath done, obſerves, that we are "juſtified FREELY by his grace;" i. e. without any deſerving cauſe in us, who believe, wherefore we ſhould be acquitted. The ſame unmerited grace reigns through every bleſſing of the covenant, according to the famous paſſage referred to before; Iſa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come "ye to the waters; and he that hath NO "MONEY, come, buy and eat, buy wine and "milk, WITHOUT MONEY, and WITHOUT "PRICE." The ſum is, that every ſenſible ſinner, who ſees his need of, and longs after the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus, is hereby directed and authorized, by the God of all grace, inſtantly to appropriate the ſame

to himſelf, without any reſerve, notwithſtanding his unworthineſs, there being nothing required at his hands, for it is all of free grace. We are now, as propoſed,

To illuſtrate the propriety of the ſinner's receiving this grace as the free gift of God, or without any pretence of merit in himſelf; to which the following particulars conduce:

1. It is *freely* beſtowed. This is the only manner in which it is tendered. Thus runs the proclamation, chap. xxi. 6. "I am Al-"pha and Omega, the Beginning and the "End: I will give to him that is athirſt, of "the fountain of the water of life FREELY." If an earthly prince declares his readineſs to reſpite or pardon the condemned, would it not be madneſs in a criminal, under ſentence of death, to claim it in any other way than preſcribed by his offended, but merciful judge? The Lord will confer the bleſſings of his love in his own way, and he that, in the ignorance and vanity of his mind, conceits that there is any thing in him, or done by him, as the deſerving cauſe of the mercy he would obtain, will be diſappointed: The manner of giving and of receiving the grace

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of God muſt correſpond; as the one, ſo the other is *freely*, or without any *merit* in the partaker. Again,

2. I MAY ſay, that it is *merited already*. Indeed it ſeems unreaſonable to aſſert, as ſome do, that our Redeemer, by his ſufferings on the croſs, procured or merited the favor of God for the penitent, ſeeing the conſtitution of his office, and even the covenant of redemption itſelf, is the fruit of his favor to his choſen; nor do I think it juſt to aſſert, that Chriſt, properly ſpeaking, purchaſed the kingdom prepared by the Father for theſe veſſels of mercy, before the foundation of the world; but ſurely he reconciled his people to God by his blood, and the meritorious cauſe of their obtaining grace or glory, lies in the complete atonement he made by his death. Seeing then that all divine grace is conveyed in this wonderful way, as the unworthineſs of a willing-hearted ſinner is no objection to his claim, ſince his ſurety has deſerved; neither can it be decently ſuppoſed, that the Father, like ſome men, in their ſchemes of doctrine, will neglect the merit of his Son, in the application of his mercy to them for whom he died. But,

3. THE propriety, and indeed the neceſſity of *thus* taking this water of life will appear, if we conſider the *total* and *eternal* unworthineſs of the ſinner. What deſert of ſalvation can poſſibly ariſe from an apoſtate creature; a creature ruined by his rebellion againſt the Moſt High? It would ſtop the career of thoſe who go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and would ſtand before God in their perſonal merit, if they knew that ſin has debaſed and debilitated its ſubject to the vileſt character, and to the moſt helpleſs condition. We have this repreſented in the prodigal ſon, Luke xv. 21. "I am, ſays he to "his father, NO MORE worthy to be called "thy ſon." Such a ſenſe had he of his vileneſs in revolting from his father, and baſely ruining himſelf, that he ſees it impoſſible, even by any future ſervice, to deſerve the character of a ſon; and this is the language of every penitent, being truly convinced of his deplorable condition. Whence can reſult any worthineſs in a creature, who is held under a juſt ſentence of condemnation to everlaſting death, for tranſgreſſing the law of his Maker and Judge, and whoſe heart is ſo immoral and impious, as we have ſeen, that

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it is enmity againſt God? Can the wretch change his own heart, or can he, while in a ſtate of rebellion, be or do any thing that may deſerve a pardon at the hands of his injured Sovereign? Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the Leopard his ſpots, or the ſinner, remaining in his oppoſition to God, be entitled to a deliverance from wrath to come? If any could deſerve this living water, or merit the mercy held forth in Chriſt, it muſt be either in a ſtate of nature or grace; in the former condition man is guilty and polluted, and as ſuch, a declared and neceſſary object of the abhorrence and indignation of the infinitely holy, and righteous Jehovah; and ſeeing, if renewed, it is by the gift and operation of God that he repents or believes, or does any good thing; neither his repentance or faith, or its fruits, can be the meritorious cauſe of his juſtification, or of any other bleſſing he enjoys in Chriſt Jeſus; and accordingly it is written, Eph. ii. 8. "By grace ye are ſaved "through faith, and *that*, i. e. *that faith*, "is not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God." Where then is boaſting? ſeeing then that in no ſtate, or under any conſideration whatever,

ever, fallen man can in the leaſt degree merit any branch of ſalvation, it is abſolutely needful that we hearken to this counſel of God; he that will take of this living water, muſt take it *freely*. And further,

4. It is not to be omitted, that if the ſinner could claim to himſelf any merit of the grace he receives, it would in proportion *leſſen the glory of the Saviour*, which is not to be endured. The righteouſneſs which the Meſſiah brought in, when he finiſhed tranſgreſſion on the croſs, imputed to the believer, is the proper, material, and ſole legal cauſe of his juſtification; and, as already hinted, his right to the enjoyment of covenant bleſſings is grounded in the purchaſe which his Saviour has made. Now, however light others make of it, the honor of Chriſt is dear to his Father, who ſaith of him, Iſa. xlii. 1. "Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine "Elect in whom my ſoul delighteth." As one juſtly notes, "the Father will not ſo derogate from the worthineſs of his Son, in whoſe merit a righteous foundation is laid for the communication of all grace to the objects of his love, as to admit any part of the honor to another." In ſhort, this manner

of

of receiving life freely is needful to the due exaltation of Jeſus, who laid the foundation of the temple in the ſacrifice of himſelf, and is to bear all the glory. Beſides,

5. No other method can agree with the becoming reſolution of Jehovah in the diſpenſation of his mercy to ſinners; namely, "That no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence," 1 Cor. i. 29. By this alone the creature is abaſed, and his boaſting excluded. Could the ſalvation of a tranſgreſſor have been in any ſenſe or degree owing to his perſonal deſert, the impoſſibility of which has already been proved, he would have had whereof to glory before God; far be the thought! It is effectually prevented by unmerited grace. Once more,

6. HAD this grace of life been conferred on account of any thing in the ſubject, on the ſame condition he muſt have continued in a ſtate of peace and communion with God, which would have rendered his final ſalvation uncertain. Heaven and earth witneſs that creatures are mutable; even innocent creatures are not to be truſted, much leſs creatures impaired by ſin, as the beſt of men are in this imperfect ſtate, however forgiven

forgiven or ſanctified. If then we were admitted to this living water upon any the leaſt comparative deſert of our own, the loſs of that merit, to which we are liable, might prove our ruin, after all the grace we have received! But thanks be to God, he has fixed our hope on a baſis immoveable; his foundation ſtands ſure; it is built, not on our *own*, but on the merit of our *divine unchangeable Redeemer*, the rock of ages; and ſhall not make aſhamed; but this proves the need of obtaining life in a way of free grace. How conſpicuous then, the adorable wiſdom and goodneſs of God in thus directing his mercy in a loſt world! O how joyful the ſound; how like cold water to the thirſty, this gracious report! "Whoſoever *will*, let "him take of the water of life freely."

THESE are the glad tidings which come from the exalted Saviour; even from that ſame Jeſus, who once in the temple at Jeruſalem, "in the laſt day, that great day of "the feaſt, ſtood and cried, ſaying, if any "man thirſt, let him come unto me and "drink," John vii. 37. Jeſus is the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever; the ſame invitation is continued to thee, O trembling

bling ſinner; even to thee who art willing to embrace him, is this word of ſalvation ſent.

UNDER this open and punctual declaration of ſovereign grace, it may ſeem ſtrange, that any who thirſt after life ſhould a moment heſitate, or remain in a painful ſuſpence; but, alas! the prepoſſeſſions of the fleſh againſt receiving grace *freely* are greater, and more deeply rooted than ſome may conceive; I can only ſay, that it is not ſufficient that a ſinner be convinced of his utter vileneſs and total unworthineſs, which is a very great thing, he muſt alſo by this invitation, or ſome other like means, be perſuaded, that notwithſtanding this his wretched ſtate, ſalvation lies open for him, or he will never accept it, and it is at leaſt as difficult to convince him of the latter as of the former; but with God all things are poſſible, and bleſſed is the man who, hearkening to this counſel of his will, lays aſide all hope or deſire of finding any worthineſs in himſelf, and no longer diſtruſts the divine goodneſs, but relying on the truth of God, and the merit of the Redeemer, comes as he is, an hell-deſerving creature, to Jeſus; for, as all that the Father giveth Chriſt, ſhall come to him, he has

engaged to receive him in the moſt abſolute manner, ſaying; "Him that cometh to me, "I will in no wiſe caſt out."

On this perſuaſion reſted her ſoul, whoſe departure we mourn; concerning whom, though a ſtranger to her perſon, I have the following anecdotes from undoubted authority, which I take leave to mention, with ſome remarks for our improvement on her caſe. It appears from the accounts I have received, that ſeveral years paſt, even from a child of thirteen, the deceaſed was obſerved to have a reliſh for the goſpel: for ſhe delighted in thoſe books only which treated on its grace. The foldings of her bible. (O that the ſame might be reported of every youth in this aſſembly!) I ſay, the foldings of her bible, with which ſhe was daily converſant, indicated the ſtate and bias of her mind: they were chiefly to the moſt pertinent and ſtriking paſſages for the ſupport of a ſenſible ſinner, who thirſts after Jeſus.

Children, thus early and graciouſly impreſſed, are under many temptations to reſerve their experience from their parents, however affectionate or godly: No wonder then that the late dear young perſon could not obtain freedom with her honored father.

Indeed

Indeed his office, being for the direction of enquiring ſouls, might have rather encouraged her; but, alas, through miſtake, this is often an additional awe on the mind of new converts. Nevertheleſs, our reverend brother is not without great ſatisfaction concerning a ſaving change on her heart; for, though he laments that it was too late to deliver all her experience, yet, from what ſhe communicated in her way to the grave, it appeared to be of longer ſtanding, and far more extenſive than he could have expected.

THE Lord has many ways to accompliſh his will. Soon after a ſenſible declenſion of nature, repeated inſtances of unexpected, and almoſt ſudden mortality, on damſels of her particular acquaintance, and under the ſame roof with her, exceedingly ſhocked her, apprehending that death would ſoon be her own lot, of which the enemy made a temporary advantage. In floods of temptation, for a ſeaſon, her ſoul was in horror; all comfort fled, and unbelief ſo far prevailed, that ſhe concluded that the Lord would have nothing to do with ſuch a wretch as herſelf. Satan overacts his part when he would reduce the awakened tranſgreſſor, under a deep ſenſe of his vile-

neſs, to deſpair; for though the reaſonings of the fleſh may, awhile, coincide with the adverſary, yet thoſe of faith, on the teſtimony of God, will ſoon overcome them; for in proportion to this idea a ſinner has of himſelf, is he meet for the reception of goſpel grace; under the clear ſound of which, his hope, which ſeemed to fail, will quickly revive with additional vigor; accordingly, the deceaſed being led to the declaration we have opened, with the teſtimony of her conſcience, as to her unfeigned willingneſs, which ſhe knew muſt be from the Lord, and being enabled to truſt in his grace, found a perfect ſweet liberty. This remained with ſcarce any interruption, till, by the rapid progreſs of her fatal diſorder, all hopes of recovery were gone, ſhe was then aſſaulted again with unbelieving queſtions, inſomuch that diſmaying fears aroſe leſt ſhe had been only deceiving herſelf. Through mercy theſe clouds ſoon diſperſed, freſh light ſprung up, and ſhe was again taught to caſt her burthen on the Lord: this door of hope continued open to the end; from that time ſhe diſcovered no other ſpiritual diſtreſs, than what aroſe from the apprehenſion ſhe had of her little love to Jeſus, who had done ſuch great

great things for her ſoul. This good work in her was manifeſt alſo in other inſtances, particularly in her patience and reſignation under very cruciating and tedious affliction; during which, no murmuring, no diſcontent or fretfulneſs appeared from firſt to laſt: the utmoſt was: "I hope the Lord will give me patience." At other times: "O this is not all that I deſerve!" Thus died in faith our beloved young friend, animated by a good hope through grace, of a free and eternal ſalvation.

IT may be enquired; How comes it to paſs that this early convert, concerning whom we have ſo much ſatisfaction, was never joined to the Lord in his houſe? You have already heard what may clear her mournful parent from the imputation of any neglect, and happy is the man who can acquit himſelf, under ſuch a providence, from miſtake or omiſſion! The truth is, that perſons enlightened in their youth, however convinced of their duty, are under great diſcouragement in a day when it is ſo common for ſenior chriſtians, or thoſe who ſeem to be ſo, by their talk of faith and experience, in private converſation, to decline a public confeſſion of Jeſus: it is eaſy to conceive a thouſand

thouſand objections and fears that may ariſe in the mind of the modeſt young ſaint, to a preſentation of himſelf at the altar, when he beholds his parent, his maſter, or any other ſerious relation or friend, whom he eſteems a believer in Chriſt, ſtand without, or at the threſhold of the ſanctuary; which they do well to conſider, who can allow themſelves to live out of communion. Beſides, we are but too prone, as it were, to deſpiſe youth, through an inattention to any hints they give of their ſpiritual concern: this may, in ſome meaſure, be owing to the broken manner in which they are frequently expreſſed; but what other is to be expected? Shall it be an objection to the account which a child gives of a good work begun in him, that it is attended with the marks of immaturity in nature? The change is not *natural*, but *ſpiritual*; and the leſs there is of a deviation from nature, in a profeſſion of chriſtianity, the more genuine it appears. For want of duly conſidering this, I am perſuaded that many things are paſſed over in comparative children, which would be much regarded in a perſon of years. It is likewiſe very hard upon theſe tender branches in Chriſt, that when their vital religion tranſpires,

ſpires, or is manifeſt, ſometimes, even pious parents, who would otherwiſe rejoice to ſee them come forth in the name of the Lord, through wrong ideas, or a falſe delicacy, forbear to exhort or encourage them to confeſs the grace they have received, as if ſomething more than *believing* was required to the communion of ſaints: but is not this arguing againſt the counſel of God? From the ſame kind of miſtake alſo, ſome appear ſhy of converſing with theſe little ones, when in the boſom of the church, as fellow heirs of the grace of life. Happy would it be if all carnal reaſon, in matters of religion, was laid aſide, and elder chriſtians, inſtead of being deficient themſelves, would, by their example and advice, promote the earlieſt ſubmiſſion to goſpel ordinances in them who give a credible teſtimony of their ſpiritual underſtanding. This the rather becomes *us*, ſince *we* are but too often cenſured for not baptizing but on a profeſſion of faith. One advantage among others might reſult from our zeal in this matter; it would probably remove, at leaſt ſoften, the prejudice of our chriſtian brethren, who differ from us, on account of our ſeeming neglect of the riſing generation. We ſhould

therefore

therefore rejoice to let all men know, that though we think ourſelves bound to ſee the traces of a divine life in the ſubject of baptiſm, nevertheleſs we gladly admit our dear offſpring, however young, when they can render a reaſon of the hope that is in them.

But not to detain you; may this mournful providence be a warning to youth, that they boaſt not of to-morrow. O my young friends, who attend this funeral diſcourſe, would to God that each of you had the ſame ſymptoms of knowledge and faith in Chriſt Jeſus as appeared in her whoſe death we lament! you are now healthy and chearful; and may the years of your honor and uſefulneſs be many! yet remember the deceaſed: behold the uncertainty of life! Are you not in like manner liable to be carried of in the prime of your days, by an unexpected, but fatal diſeaſe? and what is your hope? I queſtion not your natural or moral ſobriety; it is your happineſs and mercy to have eſcaped thoſe pollutions by which many are deſtroyed in their minority, yet allow me to be faithful; you are certainly the ſubjects of the ſame native guilt and corruption; a ſight of which, if it may be mentioned without offence, brought down the pride of your late acquaintance,

tance and friend, and humbled her in the duſt before God: And do you not read of Job, David, and other penitents, who, with all their tranſgreſſions, bewail and deprecate being dealt with for the ſins of their youth? The youngeſt in this congregation, if not cleanſed from theſe muſt inevitably periſh! O then, think it not too ſoon to be concerned about your ſalvation! But art thou, young friend, convinced of thy ruin by ſin, and doſt thou thirſt after righteouſneſs? Be encouraged by this early inſtance of mercy: the ſame hope that ſhe obtained, is ſet before thee. "Whoſoever will, let him take "of the water of life freely." Beſides, how wilt thou anſwer it if thou art found diſobedient? What excuſe can the unbeliever have, when the judgment is ſet, and among other books that of the revelation is opened, and this and the like proclamations of unmerited grace appear againſt him? What confuſion muſt cover him, when he has no exchange for his ſoul! Far be it that any of you, my dear children, ſhould then have your portion with thoſe enemies of Jeſus, who would not that he ſhould reign over them. Now the fountain of life is opened to the thirſty; but in hell, not a drop of this water ſhall be obtained, Luke xvi.

Then, what hope can there be for them who are conſigned, in their unbelief, by the King, from his awful white throne, to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels?

As to ſuch of you, beloved, whoſe children are about you, be inſtructed to hold the dear objects of your tender and delightful affection at the will of your heavenly Father. I am not inclined to diſcourage a decent expectation of credit and joy in their life, yet I beſeech you to remember, that they are no certain inheritance; you may be written even childleſs, and mourn with thoſe whoſe name is as it were cut off from the earth! Be that as it may, train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; have reſpect to their ſouls in educating of them, that, whether young or old, when they die, it may not be in their ſins, through your neglect, and their blood be required at your hands! Cruel parents! cruel to their offspring, cruel to themſelves, however fond in the fleſh, are thoſe fathers and mothers who are unconcerned about the eternal ſalvation of their children! But unſpeakable honor and joy await thoſe who travail in birth to ſee Chriſt formed in them; if their poſterity fail, they themſelves will rejoice in the end.

FINALLY,

FINALLY, Sir, with whom many ſympathize, let the good hope you have concerning the amiable creature removed, not only comfort you in this tribulation, but alſo animate your zeal, and particularly your prayers to the God of all grace, that he would beſtow the like precious faith on your ſons who ſurvive: may the tears they pour forth on the tomb of their dear only ſiſter be connected with thoſe of evangelical repentance, that they may go to her, as ſhe went from them, in peace to the grave, and meet her, with her Saviour, at the right hand of God! And may you, my afflicted brother, and the preſent fair partner of your life, who is in heavineſs with you, under this ſore diſpenſation (for I know the chaſtening is grevious) may you be comforted from on high, and long continue a mutual ſupport to each other in this mortal ſtate! And above all, dear Sir, may theſe ſorrows of death ſtill further qualify you for the execution of your ſacred office among the people of your charge; that their ſenſible advantage, even by this ſevere ſtroke, may redound in many thankſgivings to God!

IN a word: may we all be found in Chriſt, that we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment,

ment, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming, who ſaith, " Surely I come quickly !" O that each one preſent could echo it back in faith and love ! " Amen, even ſo come Lord " Jeſus."

The

## The HYMN ſung on the Occaſion.

I.

HARK! a Voice divides the Sky!
Bleſſed are the faithful Dead;
They in CHRIST who ſweetly die
Are from Toil and ſinning freed.

II.

Them the Spirit hath declar'd
Bleſt, unalterably bleſt:
JESUS is their great Reward,
JESUS is their endleſs Reſt.

III.

Who would then lament the Lot
Of the Virgin now deceas'd;
Tho' our Eyes behold her not,
Since ſhe lives on high with Chriſt?

IV.

When from Fleſh her Spirit freed,
Haſten'd homeward to return,
Mortals ſigh'd, "*The Damſel's Dead*,
Angels ſung, "*A Child is born:*"

Born

V.

Born into the World above;
They the happy Spirit greet,
Bear her to the Throne of Love,
Place her at her Saviour's Feet.

VI.

JESUS ſmiles, and ſays, "*Well done,*
*Good and faithful Servant thou,*
*Enter, and receive thy Crown,*
*Reign with Me triumphant now.*"

VII.

Angels catch th' approving Sound,
Bow and bleſs the juſt Award;
Hail! the Heir of Glory crown'd,
Now rejoicing with her LORD.

VIII.

Fuller Joys ordain'd to know,
At the ſolemn gen'ral Doom,
When th' Archangel's Trump ſhall blow,
"*Riſe, ye Dead, to Judgment Come.*"

FINIS.

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